

How to Make the Most of Zoom Online Sessions!

Based on the Open Stitch trial runs that were done recently, we have a few suggestions for participants in future Open Stitch Sessions that may help sessions to run smoothly for everyone.

Change your view to “Gallery” view:

Gatherings like Open Stitch are the most fun when we can all see each other. When you first join a Zoom meeting, your default view will be "Speaker View," which means that the person currently talking will appear as a large image on your screen, and all of the other participants will only be visible as small thumbnails above the speaker, until they talk. Not only do you not see everyone, but the large image will unexpectedly jump to whomever makes a noise, and that's sometimes disconcerting. We recommend that you switch to "Gallery View" by clicking on the "Gallery View" button or text that appears as you move your cursor over your screen. If you are on a computer, Gallery View will allow you to see small images of everyone in the session at the same time! Tablet users will see up to 9 participants at a time. In Gallery view, the person who is currently speaking will have a yellow highlight around their image. Unfortunately, most Smartphones have screens that are too small to show more than one image at a time, so Gallery View may not even be available.

Mute your microphone if you are in a noisy place:

Your microphone is automatically unmuted when you join our Open Stitch Zoom meetings. If there is a lot of background noise where you are -- Hey, are you crunching your lunch carrots!? -- you can mute yourself by clicking the "Mute" button. It is a small microphone icon that appears when your cursor moves over the screen. Unmute yourself when you want to talk by clicking the same button (which has a red line through it when you are muted). Hosts may temporarily mute participants if background noise is interfering with conversation. Moving your computer, tablet, or phone around on a surface can also cause a lot of scratchy background noise.

Include your first name and personal pronouns in your Screen Name:

Many of us know each other, but not all of us! We encourage you to add your first name and the pronouns you use to your Screen Name when you join our Zoom meeting so that we can easily chat with each other. For example, Laura uses the Screen Name "Laura (she/her/hers)" for all Zoom meetings. After you join a meeting, you can change your screen name by clicking on the "Participants" button that appears in the Zoom controls when you move your cursor over your screen, then click on your current name in the Participant list, and click the "Rename" option. Enter your new screen name and press the Return key. Also, feel free to interrupt the conversation to introduce yourself or ask someone you don't know to introduce themselves, if the host does not notice that you or someone new has joined the session.

If you are unfamiliar with the practice of including the pronouns that you want people to use for you in online settings, we recommend checking out the [GLSEN Pronoun Guide](https://www.glsen.org/activity/pronouns-guide-glsen) (<https://www.glsen.org/activity/pronouns-guide-glsen>) and this short-but-sweet post from the educational company [Bottom Line](https://www.bottomline.org/content/support-gender-inclusive-pronouns) (<https://www.bottomline.org/content/support-gender-inclusive-pronouns>).

Raise your hand if you need / want to “interrupt”:

Because it can be hard to break into a conversation when multiple people are talking, here’s a great suggestion from Patsy: If you would like to speak, raise your hand so that it’s visible in your video screen. In Gallery View, participants should be able to see if someone raises their hand. If you notice that someone has their hand raised, please quiet down and make space for that person to contribute to the conversation. We didn't find that it was necessary to do this much during the first trial runs, although during times when there was a lot of excited chatter it was hard to understand what any one person was saying. As our Open Stitch sessions grow to include more participants, watching out for one another and allowing others to contribute to the conversion will be more important.

Private or group conversations can also be carried out in the Chat text area:

You can send a chat text message privately or to everyone in the Zoom room by clicking the “Chat” button to open the Chat window. Then, select who you’d like to send the message to in the “Send to” drop-down menu, before entering your text and pressing the Return key. If you would like help with something from the meeting host, send a private chat message to the person hosting the meeting (Cynthia, Jody or Laura). They will be identified by the word “host” next to their screen name when you are viewing the participant list. Hosts will do their best to monitor the chat window and respond as quickly as they are able.

Our ability to provide online tech-support is limited, but we’ll help where we can:

The actual location of the Zoom controls and buttons varies depending on the type of device you are using in the Zoom room. Zoom controls may also be hidden, but should pop up when you move your cursor over the main screen. You will find controls to view a participant list, open a chat window, mute or unmute your microphone, turn your video on or off, as well as other options that are available to meeting participants. If you have any questions, you can always send a private chat message to the meeting host. It may be difficult for the host to respond to messages sent by email or chat outside of the Zoom room, while a session is going on. If you are having trouble getting into the Zoom room in the first place, or if you get kicked out of a session for some reason and can’t get back in, please send a message to Jody (Admin@NorthfieldYarn.com) explaining the difficulty you had. She will help if she

can, but it's hard to provide tech support from a distance, when she doesn't know anything about your device or network connection.

Your Internet connection speed and other programs running on your device will affect how well Zoom works for you:

The speed of your network will impact how well the audio and video can keep up with what is happening in the Zoom room. Other programs or apps that are running on your device may also affect how Zoom works. Here are some things you can do to optimize your chances of a good experience:

- **Quit** all programs or apps on your device that are not needed for the Zoom session.
- Make sure your camera is not using an HD setting for video. If you are running the Zoom app, you can check the video settings in the application preferences to make sure the "Enable HD Video" box is UNchecked. You may also be able to change video settings during an active Zoom session by choosing from the options found when you click on the video icon.
- If you are using cellular (mobile phone) or WiFi to connect, make sure that you are in a location that provides a strong signal. Things that can affect the strength of a WiFi signal include how far away you are from the router (box that brings the Internet/cable into your house), whether the signal from the router has to pass through brick walls, appliances, or other thick stone or metal barriers, and how many other devices in your house are using WiFi. Cell signals are affected by how far away from the cell tower you are, and whether there are physical barriers (walls, hills, etc) between you and the direct line to a cell tower.

Online video & audio meetings use lots of data - is this a concern for you?:

Video and audio streaming for Zoom room sessions may have an impact on the cost of your phone or Internet service, especially if you have a monthly data allowance in your service plan. For example: my cell phone plan has a 2 GB / month data allowance, and, if I exceed that amount, then my provider will charge me extra for each additional gigabyte that I use at a fairly expensive rate. Similarly, some Internet providers will reduce your network speed or charge you extra, if you exceed a certain amount of data use per month. If you are at all worried about this, please verify the specifics of your plan with your network or cell phone provider. Most providers have an app or online Web tool to help you monitor your data use. Measuring use before and after a Zoom session will give you some idea of whether frequent sessions will pose a problem for you.